

Anil Verma: A Renaissance Man by Design

MEMBER PROFILE



Anil Verma, Photo © John Livzey, 2014

Leonardo Da Vinci said, "Life is pretty simple: You do some stuff. Most fails. Some works. You do more of what works. If it works big, others quickly copy it. Then you do something else. The trick is the doing something else." No one better captures Da Vinci's courage and penchant for exploration than Anil Verma.

"Though I'm an architect-urban designer by profession, I have spent most of my career working on rail transportation projects," says this longtime WTS Los Angeles member.

"I came to North America (Vancouver B.C., Canada) more than 40 years ago to work for the United Nations on an international conference on human settlements called the Habitat Forum.

"Later I went to Tehran on a two-year assignment with a British company to work on the design of three new towns and the planning of five cities around the Caspian Sea.

"I came back to the US to pursue a PhD at Harvard, but I dropped out and settled for Master's. I have two master's degrees (one in architecture/urban design and the other in landscape architecture/business). While in Cambridge I went to the Harvard business school, law school, and studied forestry. I even studied film making at MIT under a very famous film maker. Oddly enough, all of these subjects have proven to be very useful throughout my career."

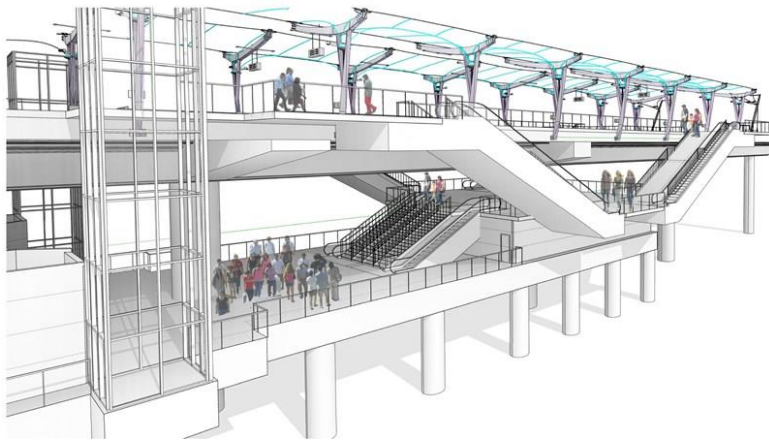
That's only the short list of Verma's derring-do. And he carries his sense of exploration on every endeavor, including the company he founded.

"I got a job offer to come to Los Angeles to work on a people-mover transit system in downtown LA being built for the 1984 Olympics. Local politics killed the project while the project was in the final design phase, and our entire design team was let go.

"But LA's Metro Red Line heavy rail project was starting and after a month of interviews, I was the first person to be hired for the consultant's team I rose up the ladder of the joint venture GEC team, and

Post Date : Mar. 11, 2014

became responsible as the principal planner/architect for 'special studies' of 21 stations, particularly the key ones.



"I had become a Project Manager on Metro Red Line's Segment 2, when in 1985 politics again managed to kill two-thirds of the project, comprising of Segments 2 and 3, and I had to fend for myself."

*Rendering of the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation's Pearl Highlands station
Courtesy of Anil Verma Associates, Inc.*

That same year, building on his success, Mr. Verma launched Anil Verma Associates, Inc.

(<http://anilverma.com>), a multidisciplinary firm offering a complete range of architecture/engineering services. Anil's dynamic adaptability and innate audacity helped the firm overcome many challenges to eventually see success. Today his firm plays a pivotal on several of the nation's defining new rail projects.

"The Metro Red Line system's Segment 2, got rerouted and the transit agency was letting out designs for five new stations. Our firm was too small and other firms did not want to team with us, so we decided to propose as a prime. And we won this \$50 million job, which was considered big in those days.

"But we really understood the technical criteria for underground stations well, and we were able to successfully reorganize equipment rooms and public spaces to economize construction costs. On this job, we saved the client 20 percent of the estimated cost!"

Today, Anil Verma Associates, Inc. is a highly respected international firm with an enviable roster of clients and copious professional awards and honors. But technical expertise and fiscal acumen are by no means his firm's only virtues.

"I've been in the transit industry nationally for a long time, and have worked with many women who belonged to WTS-LA. Some of them have done exceptionally well. My hat is off to them! Once I learned the organization was open to men, I joined. WTS-LA is an amazing organization and they do a wonderful job, and, when you compare them with some other organizations, you quickly realize how well organized and effective WTS-LA really is.

"I have always felt very comfortable in the chapter, as my company reflects the diversity of WTS-LA. We have many women leaders in our firm, and therefore, we see WTS-LA's mission as very important to our core business practices."

"Life is pretty simple: You do some stuff. Most fails. Some works. You do more of what works. If it works big, others quickly copy it. Then you do something else. The trick is the doing something else." With Da Vinci's words as a working philosophy, few, if any, have done more or succeeded as well in the transportation industry than Anil Verma.